

THE "BENJAMIN HAMMOND GRIST MILL" (1757)  
Also called the "MOFFAT-HAMMOND MILL"

Gilbert Stuart Road  
~~NORTH KINGSTOWN, RHODE ISLAND.~~  
*Wickford, Washington Co.*

HABS No. RI-2.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL and DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Rhode Island

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
PHILIP D. CREER, DISTRICT OFFICER  
11 WATERMAN STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

THE "BENJAMIN HAMMOND GRIST MILL"  
Also called the "MOFFAT-HAMMOND MILL"

Gilbert Stuart Road  
North Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island.

Owner: Gilbert Stuart Memorial Corporation,  
Nathaniel M. Vose, SECRETARY.

Date of Erection: About 1757.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Unknown.

Present Condition: Very poor. Original wooden hopper, supports, and fine granite mill stones bearing date of "1757" intact, altho the ancient wooden machinery is missing. Has, at present, iron machinery probably less than 100 years old. Owners plan restoration when funds are available.

Number of stories and materials for construction: Basement of stone and one-story frame structure above.

Other Existing Records: Article by CAROLINE HAZARD "The Gilbert Stuart Birthplace", and an old painting of the Mill in possession of Nathaniel M. Vose.

Additional Data: The land on which the "BENJAMIN HAMMOND MILL" stands was part of the original Pettaquamscutt Land Purchase made in 1656. On December 5, 1679, 120 acres were "laid out and allotted" for a mill by the Purchasers. (For complete records found in the Town Hall, WICKFORD, see attached sheet #3.  
This early mill built by Thomas Mumford and his partners-but now destroyed-was of considerable importance to the settlers, and on February 22, 1702-3, the tract of 120 acres was allotted to James Kenyon with a bond to keep up the mill. The structure and business changed hands several times and, as shown in the records, the conditions of the bond were disregarded when, in 1711, Joseph

Smith sold to William Gardiner.

About the year 1751, the GILBERT STUART House was built near the spot where, at a later date, was built the present Grist Mill. It was in the STUART HOUSE (now restored) that Gilbert Stuart, America's foremost portrait painter, was born.

In 1752, Dr. Thomas Moffat, an unsuccessful physician, and Stuart's father built a snuff mill in the first floor of the STUART HOUSE.

Dr. Moffat, in 1753, bought 270 acres of land from Edward Cole, and, from the records, it is thought that he came into possession of the land where the Hammond Mill stands.

About 1757, almost adjoining the Stuart Birthplace, was built the "BENJAMIN HAMMOND GRIST MILL" which was sold together with the farm and machinery parts belonging to Dr. Thomas Moffat after his property was confiscated, by the Town Treasurer Clarke.

In 1813, the mill was purchased by Benjamin Hammond who made it famous for the flat, soft meal produced by the mill's fine-grained granite stones.

Benjamin Hammond devised the mill to his son, Wilbur, in 1834.

In 1835, it was sold to George Kenyon, and an old newspaper clipping gives the following:

"SNUFF MILL  
and  
BIRTHPLACE  
of  
GILBERT STUART

George N. Kenyon,  
Proprietor.

Now prepared to reduce Rhode Island corn to flour of any fineness desired.

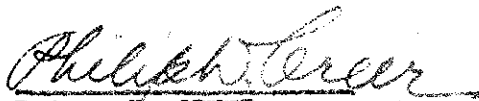
A bell will be erected on the mill and if the miller is not in -- ring the bell.

Corn and meal on hand and for sale for cash as no books will be kept. Three quarts - toll for all grain ground.

GEORGE N. KENYON."

In 1927, Nathaniel M. Vose made an appeal for the restoration of the historic buildings on this land and was instrumental in organizing the "GILBERT STUART MEMORIAL CORPORATION" which purchased, in 1930, the house, grist mill, and about three acres of land. Later on, an additional purchase of land was made and restoration of the "Gilbert Stuart House" completed under the talented direction of Norman M. Isham, F. A. I. A.

The restoration of the Benjamin Hammond Grist Mill is in prospect, and it is hoped that this project will soon be consummated.

  
PHILIP D. CREER,  
District Officer for Rhode Island.

1. December 5, 1679 120 acres "laid out and allotted" for the mill by the Pettaquamscutt Purchasers.-Fones Rec. 27, Potter Narragansett. 2d Ed. (Reprint by W.H.P. P. p. 292. 394.)
2. February 22, 1702-3 To James Kenyon, M & W on land of John Carr, with a bond for keeping up the mill.
3. December 21, 1705 James Kenyon to Joseph Smith. No extent specified - price "300" (same conditions of keeping up mill as in "2") (N. K. L. E. 1-73 Potter,) as above.
4. November 1711 Joseph Smith to William Gardiner - No conditions 300 A. W. on Samuel Boone - E. on Mill Pond and River ( ) ----- till it meets Boone's land "with all houses, buildings, mills, -----"
5. August 25, 1718 William Gardiner to Elisha Cole - in Pettaquamscutt (partly by Samuel Boone) land partly by a highway southerly (N. K. L. E. IV 39 Potter as above 394.) Elisha Cole to Edward Cole.
6. October 29, 1746 (Elizabeth Cole to Edward Cole - mill farm)  
(Edward Cole to John Cole - mill farm)  
(John Cole to Edward Cole - mill farm)
7. September 14 1753 Edward Cole to Dr. Thomas Moffat - 270 acres (N. K. L. E. XB-106) with two small dwelling houses and Grist Mill and Saw Mill.
8. Dr. Moffat's farm confiscated.
9. 1780 R. I. Col. Records IX p. 72.  
Whereas, there are now on the farm in possession of Benoin Albro, lately belonging to Thomas Moffat, in North Kingstown, one water-wheel, cog-wheel, and other parts of a wheat mill which are not of any use to the State, and are daily decaying -- (ordered disposed of -----)  
Benoin Albro, b. ----- ?  
M. North Kingstown - January 1744  
Mary Browning.  
(He must have been a tenant or Treasurer Clarke could not have sold farm to Crary.--N. M. I. - July 20, 1936.)
10. 1783 Treasurer Clarke to Col. Arch. Crary of East Greenwich.
11. 1783 Col. Arch. Crary to Peter Burlingame of Cranston.
12. December 29, 1800 P. Burlingame to daughters Sarah, wife of Caleb Cranston, Jr., and Alice Burlingame, 50 a. with Grist Mill and Saw Mill, mill pond, mill dam.
13. Same date - same as above reversed to P. B. for life. (XVIII A. 312)
14. Caleb Cranston and wife, Sarah, Alice Burlingame to Benjamin Hammond of N. K. now residing in Kent County, 10 a. with dwelling house, saw mill, mill pond (XIX 131-1813).  
(121)
15. 1834 Benjamin Hammond to son Wilbur Hammond.

16. Wilbur Hammond to William E. Sherman (Ill. son of Wilbur ?)
17. 1885 William E. Sherman to George N. Kenyon.
18. George N. Kenyon to Rachel R. Greene.
19. Rachel R. Greene devised to Mrs. Hazel Henninger - daughter of Walter Greene.
20. Mrs. Henninger to Wakefield Trust Company.
21. 1934 Wakefield Trust Company to Gilbert Stuart Memorial, Inc.